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Department of  
Agriculture

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

**Wildlife  
Services**

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## WILDLIFE SERVICES—CONNECTICUT

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### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Connecticut

Connecticut has a broad economic base across well developed urban and suburban social structures with varying technologies, education, natural resources, and industries including agriculture. While many urban and suburban areas are well developed, Connecticut has a remarkably diverse and growing wildlife population that has increased the likelihood of conflicts with the public. Every day, residents, industries, organizations, and agencies call upon the Connecticut Wildlife Services (WS) program for help and expertise in protecting agriculture, human health and safety, property, and critical natural resources from damage or threats caused by wildlife. In response WS provides technical assistance and implements biologically, environmentally, and socially sound direct wildlife damage management efforts in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

WS provides assistance to a variety of agricultural producers including dairy and vegetable farmers to prevent damage to resources caused by Canada geese and blackbirds. WS also assists the public to protect property and human health and safety from damage or threats caused by gulls, pigeons, woodpeckers, bats and other animals. WS program personnel provide wildlife recommendations to help reduce potential contamination of drinking water caused by bacteria from feces



deposited by gulls and geese. To protect the safety of air travelers, WS provides assistance to help reduce hazards associated with wildlife at airports. WS biologists also help to protect endangered shorebirds from predation caused by other birds and mammals. The Connecticut program also provides assistance as needed to resolve a variety of other wildlife conflicts such as property damage caused by roosting and nesting vultures and monk parakeets.

### Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting civilian and military aircraft and passengers from wildlife collisions
- Alleviating damage, human health and safety, or other conflicts caused by Canada geese
- Reducing damage caused by pigeons, starlings, blackbirds, and gulls
- Reducing potential wildlife disease transmission to livestock and contamination feed
- Alleviating depredation of State and Federally protected shorebirds

### Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Connecticut:

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Refining urban Canada goose integrated management methods including capture strategies
- Evaluating waterfowl as disease, parasite, and noxious weed reservoirs
- Developing new methods or strategies for managing avian predators to protected shorebirds
- Evaluating trash transfer stations and designs with regard to their potential attractiveness to wildlife

### Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS offers information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable many people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. Often, this *technical assistance* can be provided over the phone. WS also provides on-site expertise, or *direct assistance*, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. To support this effort, WS conducts *scientific research* across the Nation to develop answers to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure the program benefits from the latest science and technology.

**Protecting Agricultural Resources**—Despite high human population densities agriculture remains economically and socially important to Connecticut. WS continues to provide wildlife damage management expertise to a highly diversified agricultural industry in a variety of landscapes. These include vegetable, fruit, dairy, turf, ornamental, aquaculture, and livestock production enterprises. These operations occur in urban, suburban, and rural settings, and produce locally consumed and exported crops.

Connecticut WS conduct seasonal projects in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to manage starling

contamination of feed and water at dairy farms, which can cause salmonella infections in cattle. Cattle infected with salmonella may abort their calves, slow down or stop feeding, lose weight, and reduce milk production, causing great concern to producers in the dairy industry. In addition to cost savings from the reduction of contaminated and consumed feed losses, dairy and feed lot farmers who participate in this WS program report improvements in the quality of their cattle and milk production.

**Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports**—Wildlife collisions with airplanes cost U.S. civil aviation more than \$500 million annually and pose a hazard to flight crews, passengers, and aircraft. WS provides training, wildlife hazard assessments, and direct wildlife hazard management assistance at Connecticut airports through partnerships with Federal and State agencies and airport management. In fiscal year (FY) 2004, Connecticut WS conducted cooperative wildlife damage management programs at three State-run airports, one private airport, and one joint military and state run airport. In addition, WS conducts up to two wildlife hazard management workshops for Connecticut airport personnel each year. WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) conducts research from its Sandusky, OH field station to reduce wildlife hazards to aircraft and the public. Studies have been conducted at several large airports where scientists have evaluated habitat management practices and wildlife dispersal techniques. NWRC also maintains the National Wildlife Strike Database used by the Federal Aviation Administration and airports to monitor trends and wildlife species that pose the greatest concern to aviation. The Connecticut WS program uses the information and technology developed from both field research as well as the strike data base to enhance development of wildlife hazard management strategies and methods for application at local airports.

**Wildlife Disease Management**—To increase preparedness for emergency disease response the Connecticut WS program has enhanced collaboration with USDA, Veterinary Services (VS) and several state and local health agencies. Several interagency meetings and tabletop exercises have been conducted, which have significantly improved communications and strategies for responding to potential disease emergencies.

**Protecting Federally Endangered Piping Plovers**—Connecticut WS has assisted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in managing avian predation on federally protected piping plovers, as well as common and roseate terns which nest on Falkner Island off the coast of Connecticut. WS and the USFWS working together under a cooperative interagency service agreement have been able to reduce avian predation and enhance nesting success of these protected bird species.

**Protecting Multiple Resources from Canada Goose Damage**—The Canada goose population has been increasing in Connecticut for the past 30 years and continues to be a major wildlife problem. Many of

the traditional management methods are becoming limited in their effectiveness, while goose populations continue to grow. Connecticut WS recommends the use of integrated wildlife damage management where several effective methods are used in combination to control goose damage. Examples include the combination use of habitat management, exclusion, harassment, and repellants. The National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) is working to develop more socially acceptable and effective management methods. Connecticut WS personnel currently conduct integrated programs with towns and homeowner associations to reduce successful local goose reproduction.

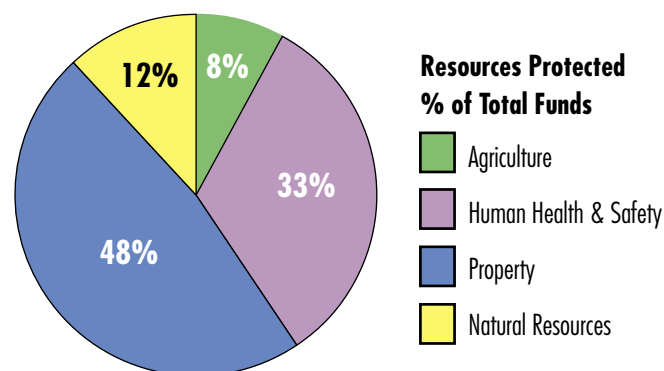
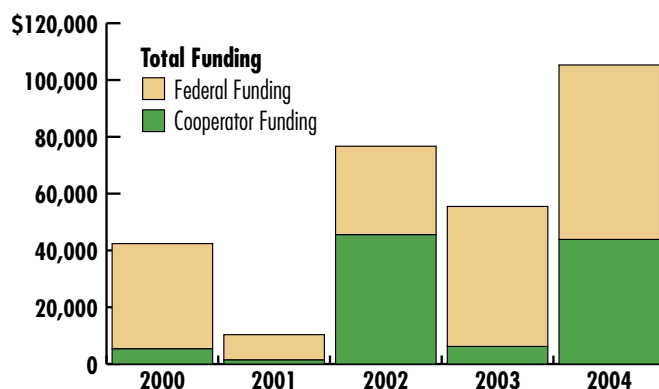
In FY 2004, Connecticut WS conducted 34 consultations and resource loss evaluations regarding Canada geese and provided recommendations associated with application for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) depredation permits at no charge.

## Looking to the Future

IWS continues to provide citizens of Connecticut with safe, effective, and humane assistance for a variety of wildlife conflicts through cooperatively funded wildlife damage management activities. These will include (1) preventing the spread of wildlife-borne diseases rabies, tularemia, salmonella, giardia, and E. coli, (2) meeting new wildlife damage management challenges to the dynamic Connecticut agricultural industry, (3) continuing to improve strategies for reducing wildlife hazards at airports.

## Connecticut Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators; such as producers; private individuals; businesses; and other Federal, State, and Local government agencies who have a vested interest in the program. These cooperators have a role in wildlife damage management, because in most cases they need help to resolve wildlife damage problems or conflicts.



### Major Cooperators:

- Connecticut Department of Agriculture
- Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
- Connecticut Department of Transportation
- Connecticut Extension System
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- University of Connecticut
- Private Industrial Companies
- Private Dairies and Farms
- Private Landfill Authorities